

A
DIALOGUE
ON
DEVOTION,

AFTER THE
Manner of XENOPHON;
IN WHICH
The Reasonableness, Pleasure and
Advantages of it are considered.

To which is prefix'd,
A Conversation of SOCRATES on the
Being and Providence of God. Trans-
lated from the Greek.

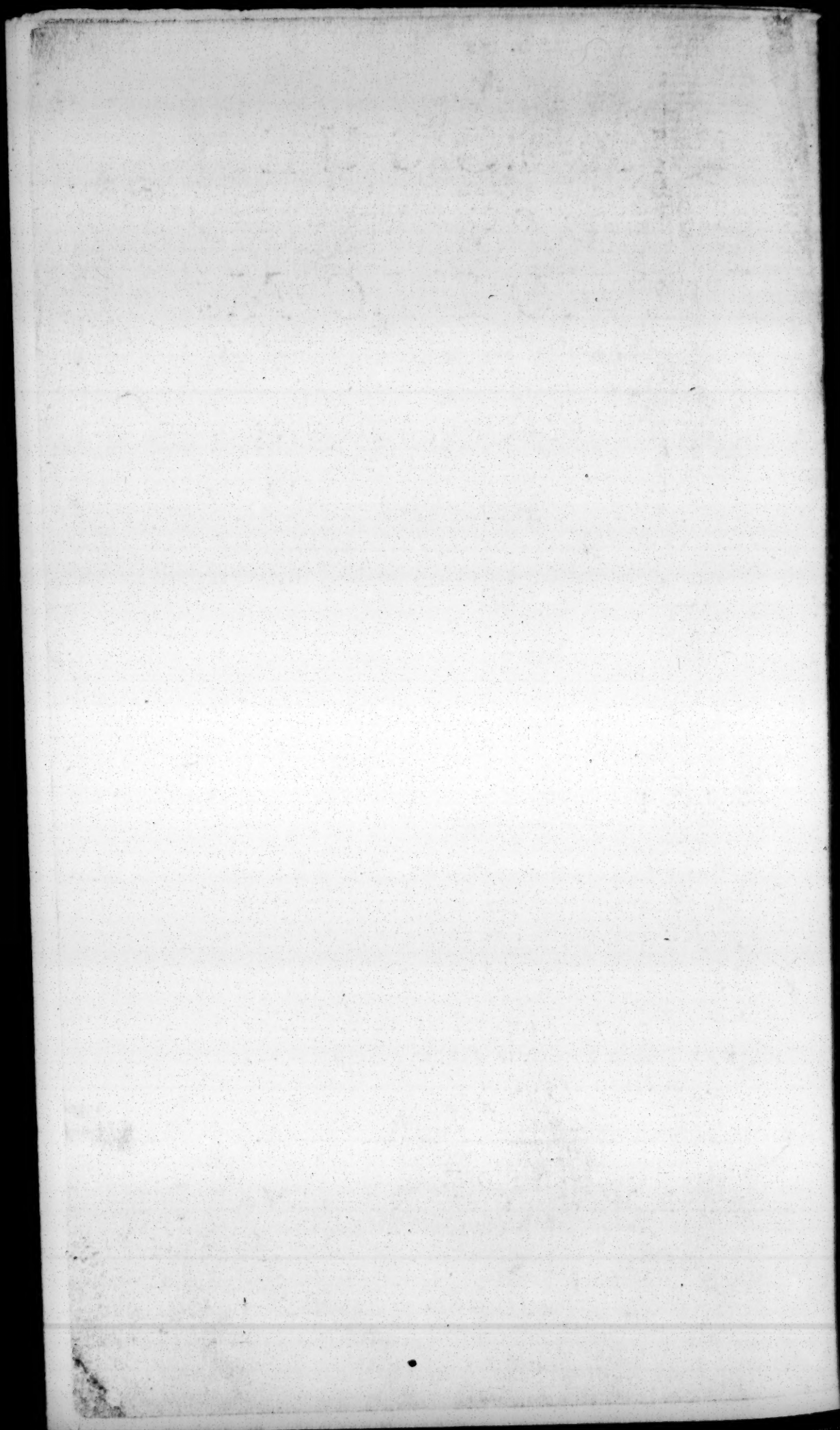
ΟΥΚΕΝ ΕΦΗ ὡς Μεγαλοπρεπεστερον αἰσιοι σε θερα-
πειειν τούτῳ μάλλον Τιμητερον Αὐτό; Socr.

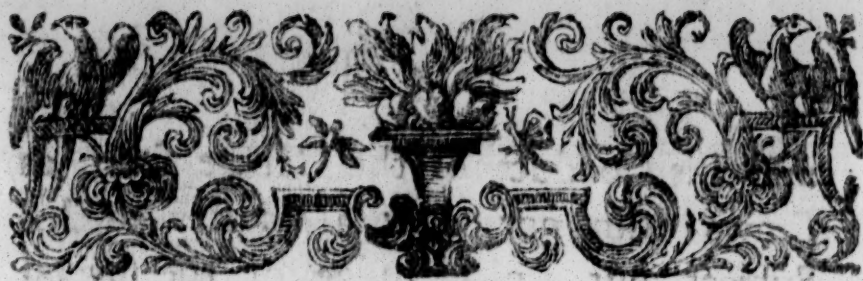
Τις δὲ σοι εἶπεν, ὅτι ἔχει καὶ εἰς τὰ ἐφ' ἡμῖν οἱ Θεοὶ
συλλαμβανῆσι, ἀρξαι γὰρ περὶ τούτων εὐχεσθαι
καὶ ὀφείβτος εὐχεται πῶς κοιμηθῶ μετ' ἐκείνης,
σύ πῶς μὴ ἐπιθυμῶ τὴ κοιμηθῆναι μετ' ἐκείνης.
Ἄλλος πῶς σερίθῳ ἐκείνῃ, σύ πῶς μὴ χρῆζω τῇ
σερίθῃναι· ἄλλος πῶς μὴ ἀποβάλῃ τὸ τέκνιον, σύ
πῶς μὴ φοβῆθαι ἀποβαλεῖν ὅλως ὡς ἐκτρέφοντάς
εὐχάσθαι καὶ θεωρεῖ τι γίνεται.

Antonin. L. ix. § 40.


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THE
PREFACE.

S the treating Subjects in the way of Dialogue, is, where well pursued, for Pleasure and Instruction prefer'd to most other ways of Writing ; so 'tis as generally agreed by the Learned, that PLATO and XENOPHON, who from the Conversations of SOCRATES were taught to introduce this way of Instruction into the Schools of Philosophy, are among the best Patterns of this kind we can follow. PLATO's Manner is Noble, his Thoughts are often great and uncommon, his Expression rich and elegant,

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and his Conduct of the Debate such, as shows him not only a Master of his Subject, but a nice Judge of the several Workings of the human Mind. With all these Advantages, he must yet be own'd inferiour to XENOPHON in Clearness, and in a natural convincing way of Reasoning. The distinguishing Character of their Master was an exact Judgment, and a Skill from the most obvious Truths, by the easiest Reasonings, to lead Persons on to Truths they before were ignorant of, or disbeliev'd. XENOPHON therefore seems to have preserv'd most of the Spirit of his Master, and kept nearest the Original in relating his Discourses; and what one of the Antients tells us of PLATO, appears very probable: that upon reading to SOCRATES, one of his Dialogues in which he bore the principal Character, SOCRATES cried out, Gods! How this young Man makes me talk things that I never thought. One great Design of this manner of Writing being to render our attention less painful, and draw on Persons unaccustom'd to close thinking, insensibly, from the Discovery of one Truth to another, I have chosen
rather

rather to imitate XENOPHON, than PLATO. As I build on the Principles prov'd by SOCRATES in the Dialogue, the Translation whereof I have given, it may be allow'd proper enough to continue him as the chief Person in that which follows. Besides, I have this Advantage by it, that I am excus'd from the Ceremony of modern Conversation. If the *Reasonings* ascrib'd to SOCRATES are *natural, easy, and just*, and if ALCIBIADES discover a *Quickness of Apprehension, a Mind ingenuous and open to Truth*, and with all his *Deference* to his Friend SOCRATES *yield to nothing but Evidence*, the Characters are supported as far as I am concern'd with them. They who desire an exacter Knowledge of the Character of ALCIBIADES as a Disciple of SOCRATES, may consult the two Dialogues of PLATO inscrib'd with his Name. They who cannot easily do this, from the following Passages extracted out of PLUTARCH'S Life of ALCIBIADES, may form a pretty just Notion of the Influence of SOCRATES over him, and his manner of conversing with him.

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“ The Affection which SOCRATES
 “ express’d for ALCIBIADES, was a
 “ great evidence of his Virtue and good
 “ Disposition, which SOCRATES per-
 “ ceiv’d to appear and shine thro’ the
 “ Beauty of his Person. And fearing
 “ least his Wealth and Quality, and the
 “ great number both of Strangers and
 “ ATHENIANS who flatter’d and ca-
 “ ress’d him, might at last corrupt him,
 “ he therefore resolv’d to interpose, and
 “ prevent so hopeful a Plant from perish-
 “ ing in the Flower, and before its Fruit
 “ came to Perfection. Such was the
 “ Happiness of his Genius, that he dis-
 “ cern’d SOCRATES from the rest, and
 “ admitted *him* while he drove away
 “ the Wealthy, and the Noble, who
 “ made Court to him; and in a little
 “ time they grew into a Familiarity.
 “ ALCIBIADES observing that his Dis-
 “ courses aim’d not at any thing wan-
 “ ton or dishonest, but laid open to him
 “ the Imperfections of his Mind, and re-
 “ press’d his vain and foolish Arrogance.
 “ Then, like the Craven Cock, he
 “ hung his Wings, esteeming those En-
 “ deavours of SOCRATES as Means
 “ which

" which the Gods made use of for the
 " Instruction and Preservation of Youth.
 " So that he began to think meanly of
 " himself, and admire S O C R A T E S, to
 " be pleas'd with his Kindness, and
 " to stand in awe of his Virtue."——

And afterward, " Tho S O C R A T E S
 " had many and powerful Rivals, yet
 " he still prevail'd most with A L C I -
 " B I A D E S, by reason of the Excellency
 " of his Genius. His Discourses mas-
 " ter'd him to that Degree, as not only
 " to draw Tears from his Eyes, but to
 " change his very Soul. Yet sometimes
 " he would abandon himself to Flatterers
 " when they propos'd to him Varieties of
 " Pleasure, and would desert S O C R A -
 " T E S, who then would pursue him as
 " if he had been a fugitive Slave. The
 " Truth is A L C I B I A D E S despis'd all
 " others, and did reverence and stand in
 " awe of him alone. And in the same
 " manner as Iron which is softned in
 " the Fire grows hard with the Cold,
 " and all its parts are clos'd again; so
 " as often as S O C R A T E S observ'd A L -
 " C I B I A D E S to be mislead by Luxury
 " or Pride, he reduc'd and corrected him
 " by

“ by his Discourses, and made him humble and modest, by shewing him in how many things he was deficient, and how very far from Perfection in Virtue.”

If the following Dialogue excite any of those, who like *ALCIBIADES*, are turn'd off by Youth and Wealth and sensual Pleasure from serious Reflection, to consider, whether as *reasonable* Beings, form'd for a *rational Happiness*, Devotion may not justly claim their Choice and Application, and thus dispose them to be devout, the Author will think himself abundantly recompens'd.



A
CONVERSATION
OF
SOCRATES,

Wherein he proves

A GOD and a PROVIDENCE.

Translated from the *Greek* of *Xenoph.*
de Memorab. l. i. c. 4.



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A

Conversation, &c.

SOCRATES and ARISTODEMUS.



IF any are inclin'd to the Opinion with regard to SOCRATES, which some, proceeding on Conjectures, have maintain'd in Writing and Conversation; that he indeed surpass'd all others in exciting Men to the *Pursuit* of Virtue, yet was *unable* to *conduct* them to it: let them consider not only his Discourses with the Pretenders to universal Knowledge, whose Vanity he expos'd and mortified by proper Questions; but his Con-

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versation

versation also with his intimate Acquaintance, and then judge whether it was from any *Defect* in him if his Discourses were not very successful. I shall first relate a Discourse of his concerning a Deity, address'd to ARISTODEMUS surnam'd the Little; observing him to neglect offering Sacrifices, or Prayers to the Gods, or the using Divination, and even to laugh at those who did, he ask'd him one Day.

SOCRATES.

ARISTODEMUS, are any of Mankind admir'd by you for their Wisdom?

ARISTODEMUS.

Assuredly.

SOCRATES.

Pray tell me their Names.

ARISTODEMUS.

For *Epick Poetry*, I admire HOMER as the most excellent, for *Dithyrambics* MELANIPPEDES, for *Tragedy* SOPHOCLES, for *Statuary* POLYCLETUS, and for *Painting* ZEUXES.

SOCRATES.

And what Artists think you most worthy your Admiration, those who make
Images

Images void of Reason and a self-moving Power? or those who produce *living* Forms, endow'd with *Reason* and a *Power* of Motion?

ARISTODEMUS.

Those Artists certainly who produce the living Forms; if indeed these owe their Production to some *designing Cause*, and are not merely the Effects of Chance.

SOCRATES.

But of two Productions, the one of no apparent Use, the other manifestly adapted to the most valuable Ends, which would you ascribe to Chance, and which to Design?

ARISTODEMUS.

'Tis reasonable to ascribe to Design, that which is manifestly useful.

SOCRATES.

Don't you think the first Former of Mankind *design'd* their Advantage, when he gave them the several Senses by which Objects are apprehended, Eyes for things visible, and Ears for Sounds? Of what Advantage would agreeable Scents have been to us, if Nostrils suited for their Reception had not been given?
And

And for the Pleasures of the Taste, how could we ever have enjoy'd these, if the Tongue had not been fitted to discern and relish them? Farther, does it not appear to you wisely provided, that since the Eye is of a delicate Make, 'tis guarded with the Eyelid drawn back when the Eye is used, and covering it in Sleep? How well does the Hair at the extremity of the Eyelid keep out Dust, and the Eyebrow by its Prominency prevent the Sweat of the Forehead from running into the Eye to its hurt? How wisely is the Ear formed to receive all sorts of Sounds, and not be filled with any to the Exclusion of others! Are not the Fore-Teeth of all Animals, fitted to cut off proper Portions of Food, and their Grinders to reduce it to a convenient Smallness? The Mouth, by which we take in the Food we like, is fitly plac'd just beneath the Nose and Eyes, the Judges of its Goodness; and because the Excrement offends the Senses, the Passage by which 'tis thrown off, is plac'd where it may least affect them. Can you doubt whether these Effects bearing on them such evident Marks of Design belong

belong to Chance, or to an intelligent Mind ?

ARISTODEMUS.

I own when I view them in this Light, they appear the Effects of a *wise* and *benevolent* Artist.

SOCRATES.

And are *these* less evident Instances of his Wisdom or his Goodness? The strong Inclination implanted in Animals to propagate their Kind; the tender Sollicitude in Mothers for preserving their Offspring; that pressing Love of Life, and violent Dread of Death in all Animals. Do not these look like the Works of one who was willing the Race should be continued? Let me farther ask you, don't you think yourself posselt of some degree of Wisdom? If Modesty hinder your answering in the Affirmative, I will answer for you; and can you think there is no Wisdom besides in the Universe? Do you not observe that the small Portion of Earth, which makes a Part of your Body, is taken from a vastly larger Mass; the Fluid Part from an immense Ocean of Fluids; and the small Quantities of the other Elements which
com-

compose your Frame from the great Funds of each, and can you think you got a Mind and Wisdom luckily, you know not how, when there was no Intelligence in Nature whence you could have it? Or that those vast and numberless Portions of Matter, are mov'd, combin'd, or separated, with such perfect Regularity, by ignorant Chance?

ARISTODEMUS.

Why not? Since in all effects of human Skill, I see the Artists who produce them, but I can no where see those wise Gods, to whom you ascribe all this Beauty and Use.

SOCRATES.

Neither can you see your own Soul, which yet directs and commands your Body. Must we therefore say, that your wisest Actions do not proceed from an Intelligence within, but are mere lucky Hits?

ARISTODEMUS.

You mistake me, my dear SOCRATES, I do not despise the Deity; I only think more honourably of him than to imagine he needs my Service.

SOCRATES.

S O C R A T E S.

But must you not own, that by how much the greater his Dignity who is pleas'd to take care of you, so much the more you ought to honour him ?

A R I S T O D E M U S.

True, and if I thought the Gods did really concern themselves for the Happiness of Mankind, and attend to their Affairs, I would not fail to pay them due Honour.

S O C R A T E S.

And can you think they are not concern'd for the Happiness of Man, when they have made him alone of all Animals *Erect*, which Posture fits him to command a larger Prospect, better to contemplate the Heavens, and best secures him from Injuries? Have they not also given him with a Mouth, Hearing and Sight; and when other Animals have only Feet, they have given him Hands, by which he procures all the Conveniences of Life? Tho the others have Tongues as well as he, his alone is contriv'd to form articulate Sounds, by which he can communicate his Thoughts to others: and whereas other Creatures are confin'd

to particular Seasons for enjoying the Pleasures of propagating the kind, Men are continually indulg'd them even to old Age. Nor has the Deity confin'd his Care to the Body, but as the greatest Favour of all has plac'd within it a most excellent Spirit. No animals, except Men, apprehend the Grandeur and Beauty of the divine Works, and thence rise to the Knowledge of their Cause. Human Societies alone, of all the Tribes of living Creatures, approach the Deity by Worship. What Wisdom is equal to the Human for guarding against the Inconveniences of Life, Hunger, Thirst, Cold, or Heat; or for removing Diseases, improving Strength and Vigour; for discovering new Truths, or retaining what we have seen or heard or learnt? Whence is it that you do not see the peculiar Favour of the Gods in the Superiority they have given Men above other Animals, among whom they appear a sort of Gods, greatly pre-eminent in Body and Mind? Had a human mind been united to the Body of an Ox, it could not have executed its Counsels; nor would Hands, destitute of a Mind to direct their Activity,

Activity, have secur'd him a superiour Happiness. Can you then who have receiv'd both these Gifts, and of so great Value from the Gods, believe them regardless of your Happiness? What must they do to convince you of their Attention to your Welfare?

ARISTODEMUS.

Send me constant Directions from Heaven for the avoiding Evil and obtaining Good, such as you boast to receive from them.

SOCRATES.

Are not you a Sharer in the Advantage of those Counsels, which thro' Divination the Gods give the People of *Athens*? Do they not speak to you by those Signs and Prodigies by which they signify their Pleasure to the *Grecian* People, or to all Mankind? Are you alone excluded from the Benefit of those Advices, and neglected by them? Think you the Gods would have planted such a Persuasion in our Breasts that we might expect Good or Evil from them, if they were not really able to bestow both? Or that Men from so long an Experience would not have discover'd the Mistake? Don't you

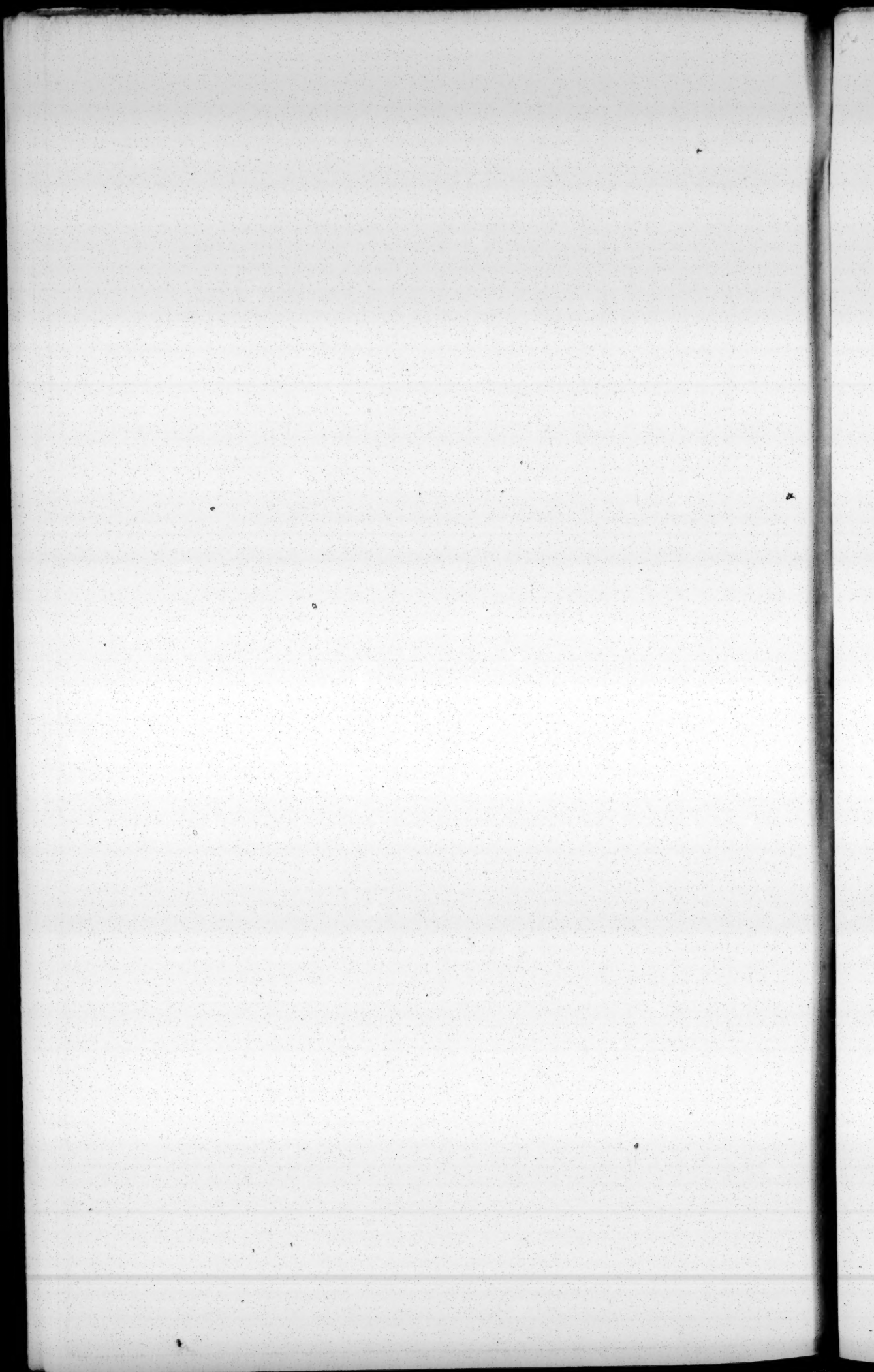
see the wisest and most antient Nations, and Cities the most religious, and that Age of Life which is most distinguished for Wisdom, most remarkable also for Piety ?

My good Friend, let your own Frame instruct you. Does the Mind inhabiting your Body with ease dispose and govern it ? Should you not then conclude that the *universal Mind* with equal Ease governs and actuates *universal Nature* ? And not think that while your Eye can comprehend a large Prospect, 'tis beyond the Capacity of the divine Eye to comprehend all things ; and that when you can at once consider the Interests of the *Athenians* at home, in *Egypt*, and in *Sicily*, that the divine Wisdom cannot at once be equal to the Affairs of the Universe. From Experience you acquire a Knowledge of Mankind ; by expressing a Concern for other's Happiness, you discover who will be concern'd for yours ; by conferring Favours, you learn who will make a Return ; and by asking Advice know who are wise : make the like Experiment with the Gods, and you will soon be at a Certainty whether they will guide Mankind

kind in Cases that require a superiour Direction. You will soon be convinced the Greatness of the divine Mind is such as to see at once all things, hear all things, be present every where, and direct all the Affairs of the World.

'Tis clear to me that SOCRATES, by such Discourses form'd his Acquaintance to an Abstinence from all impious; unjust and base Actions, not only when they acted in publick, but when alone; convincing them that not one of their Actions escap'd the Notice of the Gods.





A
DIALOGUE
ON
DEVOTION,
AFTER THE
Manner of XENOPHON;
WHEREIN
The Reasonableness, Pleasure and
Advantages of it are considered.

—




A
DIALOGUE
ON
DEVOTION, &c.

SOCRATES, ALCIBIADES.

SECT. I.

SOCRATES.

OU seem of late, ALCIBIADES, by your neglecting to attend the publick Offices of Devotion, or careless Behaviour when present, to think the Worship of the Deity, a tiresome, or useless Service.

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ALCIBIADES.

Your Conjecture, SOCRATES, is pret .
right, I see no Reason for entertaining
this great Being with an account of his
Excellencies, which he knows already
better than we can pretend to do. What-
ever others may talk of the Pleasures of
Devotion, it appears to me all Enthu-
siasm; I find no Pleasure in it, nor do I
see Advantage arising from it.

SOCRATES.

'Tis certain the Deity as Omniscient
cannot be pleas'd with any Worship
which does not proceed from the Heart;
and being supremely good and happy can
require no Service which it is not as
much our Advantage as Duty to render:
shall we inquire then whether Devotion
be really founded in Reason, and Produc-
tive of Happiness?

ALCIBIADES.

Agreed. The Subject is of Import-
ance, and we have Leisure for the In-
quiry.

SOCRATES.

To prevent seeking we know not what,
let us first settle the meaning of the
Term.

Term. By *Devotion* then I understand from Men, with Regard to God, *Veneration, Gratitude, Dependence, and a ready Submission to his Will, exprest by proper Actions, and on all proper Occasions, so as to render the Temper of Mind arising from those Actions habitual.*

ALCIBIADES.

I have no Objection against your Account of the Thing. Proceed.

S E C T. II.

SOCRATES.

YOU believe Almighty Power, infinite Goodness, and the most comprehensive and unerring Wisdom, to be Perfections belonging to the first Cause?

ALCIBIADES.

I do.

SOCRATES.

You believe him ever present and attentive to human Affairs?

ALCIBIADES.

Let me see it prov'd.

SOCRATES.

'Tis easily done. Can a Being *act* where it *is* not?

ALCIBIADES.

It cannot.

SOCRATES.

If God then continually *act* around us, you will allow him to *be present*; and if he *exert his Perfections* for the *good of Mankind*, you will allow him *attentive to human Affairs*?

ALCIBIADES.

Yes. But show me the *Deity* thus *act- ing*. I can *see* no *intelligent Cause* in the World besides Men. Nothing but Matter and Motion.

SOCRATES.

Tho you cannot *see* the human *Mind*, you conclude it to reside in the Body by its *Effects*. A wise Discourse, a benevolent Action, convince you that the Tongue is guided by Reason, and the Hand mov'd by a Benevolent Principle. And wherever Effects which in all other cases we should ascribe to Wisdom, Power, or Goodness, are constantly and regularly

regularly produc'd by Beings void of Thought, and a Power of Motion, you conclude they must be *conducted* by a *Mind* possesst of these Qualities?

ALCIBIADES.

I cannot avoid this Conclusion.

SOCRATES.

The Fire that warms you *knows nothing* of its Serviceableness for this Purpose, no more does that Huge Globe of Fire in the Heavens we call the Sun: the Life and Happiness of all Animals depend on its Influence, and these on its right Situation, and must not its Place be appointed, its Course directed, and its Beams darted by almighty Wisdom and Goodness; which hinder its ever wandering in the immense Spaces of the Heavens so as to leave us in disconsolate Cold and Darkness, or coming so near as to burn us up? Must not the Being that inlightens and warms us by the Sun, raises Vapours, brings forth and ripens the Fruits, and is thus ever acting around us for our Benefit, be ever present? The Earth in itself is a senseless motionless Mass, and void of all Counsel; yet
proper

proper Parts of it are continually rais'd thro' the small Pipes that compose the Bodies of Plants and Trees, contribute to their Growth, open and shine in Blossoms and Leaves, and swell and harden into Fruit. What human Skill from Earth and Water could produce so vast a Variety of beautiful and agreeable Fruits? Must not the Being who thus *continually exerts* his Wisdom and Goodness around us for *our Advantage*, be own'd *ever present* and *concern'd* for our Welfare?

ALCIBIADES.

I confess his Presence which I never so clearly apprehended as now.

SOCRATES.

'Tis a Truth you cannot too firmly believe. Think how many reasonable Beings indow'd with great mental Excellencies, and cloath'd with Bodies in whose Frame appear exquisite Skill and Goodness are continually form'd and brought into the World. *Parents* cannot claim the Honour of being the Authors of these Effects. They know not when, nor how the Bodies of their Children

dren are fram'd ; they are conscious to no such Power as forming a *Mind*, whose Nature is unknown to them. What clearer Proofs of his Presence and Goodness can the Deity give? Must you not confess the great Parent of the human Race ever acting in and around us, and desirous of our Happiness, to whom he gives continually Life, Breath, and all things?

S E C T. III.

ALCIBIADES.

I Own his Presence and Energy as the Author and Preserver of Nature, but not as the *moral Governour* of the World.

S O C R A T E S.

This is no less easily prov'd. You allow a Difference in Actions? Must not a wise and good Being be differently affected towards Gratitude, and Ingratitude, Humanity and Cruelty, Fidelity and Perfidiousness, Temperance and Intemperance?

ALCIBIADES.

He must.

S O C R A T E S.

SOCRATES.

Will not a wise and good Parent love most a Child who is grateful, modest, benevolent, diligent, and temperate? Must he not be displeas'd with an ungrateful, impudent, spiteful, lazy, and intemperate one, who, instead of cultivating the Peace of the Family, disturbs and ruins it, and fills all with Disorder, Strife, and Injuries? And can the infinitely wise and good Parent of Mankind be indifferent to their Conduct which he continually beholds?

ALCIBIADES.

It seems not.

SOCRATES.

Must not the same wise Goodness that prepar'd the Sun to enlighten and warm us, be concern'd for the Practice of Temperance, Righteousness, and Mercy among Men, which to say the least are as necessary to their Happiness, as the Light and Heat of the Sun? Must he not be pleas'd with those of his Offspring whom he observes falling in with his Designs, and promoting the common welfare of his Children, and be offended with

with those who counteract him? Can he, whose perfect Wisdom is attended with equal Power, fail of acting towards his Creatures and Children agreeably to their different moral Behaviour? Can he fail of making the good happy, and the vicious miserable in proportion to their Deserts; can he be otherwise than the *Moral Governour* of the World?

ALCIBIADES.

As Modesty, Justice, Gratitude, Benevolence, Pity, and the like Virtues, contribute to the Happiness of *Society*; and in *private Persons*, Temperance, Industry, and well-govern'd Passions to the Health of the Body, and the Tranquillity of the Mind; I grant the Deity being a most wise and good Parent and Governour must be concern'd that these Virtues be practis'd by Mankind, and be differently affected towards them as these Virtues are, or are not practis'd by them. But after all what *Necessity* is there for *Devotion*? The Deity *fully knows* his own Perfections, and his Sense of them cannot be *rais'd* by our Praises. And as he knows what is *best* he will certainly do it whether we ask him, or not.

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S E C T.

S E C T. IV.

S O C R A T E S.

BUT supposing it *best* that the *hum-ble and devout* Petitioner should be *happy* and obtain his Request, and the *Neglector* of the Deity, the *unasking* Dependant be in *Return neglected*, and still want what he will not suppliantly intreat from the divine Bounty ; where then is your Objection ? And this is the plain Truth of the Case. Is not *Veneration* due to *eminent Merit* in Men, an honourable Sense of it on our Minds, a Concern to be approv'd by those possess'd of it, and to avoid whatever might justly draw on us their Censure ? Are not the Wise and Good, when present, to be treated with Marks of Respect ? Is not this a Debt we owe to these Qualities wherever we see them in others in an excelling Degree, and a Means of cherishing them in ourselves ? And does not he who fails of expressing a proper Regard to the Presence of eminent Merit show a culpable Insensibility ?

A L C I-

ALCIBIADES.

It seems so.

SOCRATES.

Is not a Respect due to Parents when present, especially if distinguish'd by Prudence and Goodness?

ALCIBIADES.

There is.

SOCRATES.

And is there not an *habitual Veneration* due to the great Parent of the human Race, to the supreme Wisdom and Goodness *ever* surrounding us? Ought we not to own him present by a direct Regard, a correspondent Awe, Esteem, and Delight, by a Concern to avoid whatever may displease him, and to practise what may secure us his Approbation?

ALCIBIADES.

But we cannot always think of God, we must then be inattentive to every other Object and Affair.

SOCRATES.

I grant it. Yet is there no *Medium* between *always* thinking of his Presence,

and *never* attending to it? Could we without neglecting other important Affairs ever keep him in View, would it not be greatly advantageous to suppress every vicious Emotion, and excite to every Virtue? But granting this beyond our Power; should we not at least attend to his Presence to *such* a Degree as may prevent a *total* Forgetfulness of him, and maintain in our Minds a governing Concern to please him?

ALCIBIADES.

But how is this to be done?

SOCRATES.

What strikes not our *Senses* we can only present to our Minds by *Meditation*. Would you preserve an Affection to an *absent* Friend, you must *often think* of him? Would you preserve a Consciousness of an *invisible* Deity? you must *frequently think* of his Presence, and trace his Perfections in their Effects around you, think of him so often as to render your Veneration *habitual*. The recollecting then and acknowledging his Perfections, and his Works, and thus exciting an answerable Veneration for his boundless Wisdom, Greatness,

Greatness, and Love, ever surrounding us, which is *one* Part of Devotion, is highly reasonable. 'Tis no other than behaving to an ever present God *as* ever present. And on the contrary to live forgetful of him, insensible to his Presence, and unconcern'd whether he approve or condemn us, is, in *Effect*, to deny his Presence, and is unreasonable.

ALCIBIADES.

This is too evident to be disputed :
Proceed.

S E C T. V.

SOCRATES.

YOU allow'd *Gratitude* to be a Virtue, the greater the Favours, the greater the Obligations to Gratitude, and the greater the Crime of Ingratitude. Can there be Favours greater than those the Deity has confer'd on Men ? Did not his free Bounty give us to be, make us capable of Thought, Action, and Enjoyment, of the Pleasures of Sense, and Imagination, of Knowledge and Virtue ? Are not all our Capacities of Good, and every Object of Enjoyment, his Gifts, who
form'd

form'd the World also, and with the same unchanging Goodness continues the Reason of our Minds, the Health and Vigour of our Bodies, the Influence of the Sun, the Fruitfulness of the Earth, and the Life of all Creatures; which without their Knowledge or Concurrence you see maintain'd in a manner that evidences the highest Wisdom? Is there Goodness equal to this? Are we not under constant Obligations for his constant Energy? Is not constant Gratitude due to such a Benefactor, a warm Sense of his Goodness and our Obligations, and a Disposition to make any Returns that are in our Power?

ALCIBIADES.

As I owe every thing to God, and am continually indebted to his Bounty, it is fit I be grateful.

SOCRATES.

Is not *Praise*, or a *thankful Enumeration* of his Benefits, a *natural Expression* of Gratitude, and a *means* to cherish it? Does it not appear fit that you do what on your Part is necessary to frame you to a grateful *Temper*, and keep up a lively
Sense

Sense of his Goodness; and when the Deity has retir'd behind second Causes, that our Regard to him and Gratitude for his Favours might be a *Virtue*, and the matter of our *Choice*, ought you not by intense Meditation to pierce the Veil, and to adore the great Source of all Good, ever flowing, and, tho infinitely diffusive, never to be exhausted?

ALCIBIADES.

I own this reasonable.

SOCRATES.

Since the Deity has thus wisely retir'd behind second Causes, and objects of Sense strike most powerfully, and easily ingage the Attention, is it not fit you strive to surmount those lesser Difficulties which oppose your rising to a becoming Gratitude, and practise that Retirement, Meditation, and Praise, which are the proper Means of cherishing this grateful Temper, or natural Expressions of it?

ALCIBIADES.

You allow'd this Gratitude could not constantly employ our Thoughts and Affections: what *Seasons* would you peculiarly recommend for it?

SOCRATES.

Besides *Seasons distinguish'd by extraordinary* Instances of Goodness, the *End* in other cases must regulate the *Means*. As we are obliged to make a grateful Disposition to an infinite Friend and constant Benefactor *habitual*, we are oblig'd to repeat the Thoughts and Actions proper to express or cherish this Disposition, as often as we find *necessary* to this End. Two Seasons seem *peculiarly* pointed out by *Nature*. The *Morning* when we rise a-new to Life and Action and Enjoyment, to behold and possess a-new the Effects of the divine Bounty. This remarkable Renewal of the divine Favours demands a more express Gratitude; and, before we enter on Action and the World, is fitted deeply to impress our Minds, and engage us to an answerable Behaviour. And what more *natural* than at the *Close* of the Day, before we quit, as it were, the World, and for a Time cease from its Business and Pleasures, to review the Goodness of our Creator throughout the Day, and fall down before him in thankful Acknowledgement of his constant Goodness, and increasing Bounties?

S E C T. VI.

ALCIBIADES.

THUS far Devotion appears *reasonable*. *Veneration and Praise* of infinite *Greatness* and *Goodness* ever *present* and ever *active*. But what need of *Prayer* to a God who *knows* our *Wants*; as if *absolute Goodness* needed to be *importuned*, or *unerring Wisdom* *directed*?

SOCRATES.

'Tis granted the divine *Wisdom* wants not *Information* from us, nor the divine *Goodness* to be *solicited*; but if there be a *Temper* of *Mind* that better *qualifies* for receiving *Favours* than the contrary, and *Prayer* be a *natural Expression* of this *Temper*, and *increase* it, you will own it a *reasonable* Condition of receiving the *Bounties* of *Heaven*.

ALCIBIADES.

Name that peculiar *Temper*.

SOCRATES.

An *habitual Sense* of our *Dependance* on the *Deity*, and our *Obligations* to him

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for every good we possess, and a *Concern* to practise what may qualify us for his Favour. Are not a constant serious Acknowledgment to God that we are subject to many wants which he alone supplies, and an earnest intreating him to give us what is best, especially Wisdom and Virtue, *natural Expressions* of a Sense of our Wants, and his Bounty, and of our Value for these Favours? Would not the Neglect of such Applications be in *effect denying* that we depend on him, and he supplies us? And then, if Experience be consulted, you'll find this suppliant addressing the Deity to *cherish* a Sense of our constant Obligations, and a Concern to practise what evidences a grateful Mind, and qualifies for his Favour; and to shun whatever would involve us in the Guilt of the greatest Ingratitude to the greatest Benefactor. If we with Earnestness request from God those greatest Blessings Wisdom and Virtue, will not this excite and incourage us to do what may shew our real Value for these Blessings? To try every Method in our Power to obtain them? And on the contrary, if we do not seriously ask what we
want,

want, we shall soon cease to praise his Goodness for the Supply, and instead of ascribing all to his Bounty, be apt to regard every thing we enjoy as the necessary Effect of the *natural Course* of things, by whom appointed, and by whom continued we *beed* not. Can this grateful Dependance on an *invisible* God, and Concern to please him be otherwise preserved amidst *sensible* Objects, and in a World where we see only *second* Causes? And ought we not thus to own the Truth of Things, the divine Bounty continually supplying us, and our absolute Dependance and increasing Obligations?

S E C T. VII.

ALCIBIADES.

WHAT you say has a great Appearance of Reason, and I will consider it. What was the other Part of Devotion you mentioned?

SOCRATES.

A Disposition to do whatever God requires, whether *submitting* chearfully to his Appointments, or *practising* what is right and good, and in our Stations

promoting the publick Happiness, from a *Conviction* of its *Agreeableness* to him, whom we are above all obliged to please. This is easily prov'd to be reasonable, and arises from the aforementioned Affections made habitual. If the supreme *Wisdom* and *Goodness*, whose Property we are, dispose all Events, they cannot fail of being directed to the *best* Ends, and in Duty and Interest we are obliged to a chearful Submission. Whatever Part is assign'd us, whether a patient Virtue conflicting with and approv'd by Evils and Opposition ; or Moderation amidst Prosperity, a Contempt of bodily Pleasures, and an active Benevolence : We have only to act our Parts well, assur'd that as this is now *best* for the *whole*, we shall find it also (in the End at least) to be *best* for *us*. And then a warm Conviction that we owe every Good to the divine Munificence, and are indebted for innumerable Favours, necessarily kindles in an ingenuous Mind a strong Desire to make every acceptable Return, satisfies him intirely of his Claim to Obedience to whom he owes every Power and Object of Enjoyment,
and

and carries him to a zealous Imitation of the divine Perfections in doing good, and thus gives him the noblest Joys in conscious Gratitude, and a Communication of Happiness.

S E C T. VIII.

ALCIBIADES.

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HAVE you any other Parts of Devotion you would recommend as reasonable?

SOCRATES.

There only remain a *penitent Acknowledgment* of our *Offences*, and an *earnest Supplication* of the divine *Forgiveness*, and *Assistance* in order to our acting better. As God is gracious and compassionate, and we too frequently offend, 'tis a fit Acknowledgment of his *Mercy* to implore it, and of our deserving his *Displeasure* to confess before him our *Offences*. The Recollection and Confession of these, as in the Presence of the best of Beings, and with a View to obtain from his *Mercy* the Remission of them, as it is but *owning the Truth of things*, the
divine

divine Lenity, and our Viciousness, so it has the happiest Influence to increase the ingenuous Shame and Sorrow from the Apprehension of his past Goodness whom we have offended, and his Readiness yet to forgive ; and to confirm also our Resolutions to behave more worthy his Goodness, and the noble Nature and Capacities he has granted us. Every one judges the *insensible* and *obstinate* Offender an *improper* Subject of Mercy. And if a Sense of our Faults, and a Disposition to amend them, be a necessary Qualification for recovering the Favour of a wise and good Sovereign, a humble Confession of our Offences, and an earnest intreating the divine Mercy are *necessary*, being the *natural Expressions* of a penitent Disposition, and the likeliest *Method* to render it effectual to a better Conduct. As to *Prayer* for *divine Influences* to direct, excite, and succeed us in the Paths of Virtue, this is a *proper* Acknowledgment that we *need* a superiour Assistant and Guide ; and that the Deity, the perfect Pattern and great Lover of Virtue and Goodness, is *delighted* and *ever ready* to promote it in his Creatures. I know your
Opinion

Opinion of my Virtue, and you have often heard me profess my Obligations to a superiour Guide.

S E C T. IX.

ALCIBIADES.

MY dear SOCRATES, you have mightily altered my View of things. I not only begin to see Devotion to be reasonable, but the noblest Part of a reasonable Conduct.

SOCRATES.

You see then the Weakness of your Objection against Prayer, that God will do what is best, whether we pray or not. For if it be best, that the grateful, the dependant, the resigned, obedient, and good, be made happy by a presiding Deity, 'tis best to be devout; this being the only way to express or cherish those Dispositions. We might as well break the Laws under a wise and good Magistrate, and say such a Governour would do what was best however we behaved, and then find it, to our Conviction *best* for the *Community* and for *ourselves* that

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offending

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offending

offending we should *suffer* in order to Amendment, tho it had been much *better* for us never to have offended.

ALCIBIADES.

You have thorowly satisfied me of the Reasonableness of Devotion ; I am convinced that a constant *Veneration*, *Love*, and *Gratitude*, become me toward an ever present, Almighty, most wise and good God, my greatest Friend and Benefactor, with a deep sense of *Offences* against him, and his compassionate *Forgiveness* : that as I would act truly and reasonably, and value his Favour, I am concerned to *cherish* those Dispositions, and render them as *constant* as his Goodness and my Dependance: and that a solemn owning by *Prayer* and *Praise* every *Morning* and *Evening* the divine Perfections and Benefits, are fit Instances and Expressions of this devout Temper, and by a natural Influence render it *habitual*.——But there is an Objection yet behind. If it be reasonable yet how is it *pleasant*, or how can I think it so, who never experienc'd Pleasure in it?

S E C T.

S E C T. X.

SOCRATES:

DOES not *Pleasure* arise from Actions *suited* to the *Nature* of the Being; and must not *reasonable* Actions give *Pleasure* to a *reasonable* Being?

ALCIBIADES.

It seems so.

SOCRATES.

Is there not a *Pleasure* in the Contem-
plation of *Truth*, which *rises* according
to the *Grandeur* or *Beauty* of the Object
known and contemplated? And is there
an Object more grand or beautiful, than
an *infinite Mind* actuating and governing
that Immensity of Beings we call the
Universe, attending at the same time to
an infinite Variety of Creatures and Ac-
tions, filling an infinite Variety of Capa-
cities for good, directing all Events with
the kindest Purposes of his Creatures
Happiness, and ever diffusive of Good,
without a Possibility of being wearied or
exhausted to Eternity? What *Grandeur*
and *Beauty* appears in the Frame of the
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World, and its several Parts; what Wisdom in the continual Production of such an inexhaustible Variety of Beauty, Life, and Good from formless Matter, mov'd in obedience to a few simple Laws! Had not the Study of Nature such Charms for *Anaxagoras*, that he cheerfully quitted a large Estate, and all the Pleasures it could minister, yea his Friends and Country, the more freely to prosecute and enjoy the Pleasures of contemplating and admiring the innumerable Instances of the divine Wisdom in the natural World?

S E C T. XI.

IS there not a *Beauty* in *Characters*, and an exquisite Pleasure in considering, admiring and loving what is *morally beautiful*? The wise, the brave, the generous *Patriot*, prodigal of his Ease, Health and Life for his Country's Good, ever watchful for its Security, surmounting Labours, Opposition, and Ingratitude in the Pursuit, and ever firm, benevolent, disinterested, and compassionate! With what Delight do we contemplate, admire,

mire, and love this Character, tho' *fictitious*, when well drawn by our Poets on the Stage? And must there not result the highest Pleasure from contemplating the infinite *Original* of Life, Perfection, and Happiness, a *God* infinitely Beneficent, who neglects not the meanest Creature capable of receiving Good from him, the constant Preserver and Governour of all things, whose Goodness is Proof against Opposition and Ingratitude, the Follies and Vices of Mankind, and who never quits the Design of his Creatures Happiness, till by obstinate Wickedness they render themselves utterly unfit for Favour, and their Felicity inconsistent with his Love of Virtue, and the Happiness of the Whole?

ALCIBIADES.

I am asham'd to have own'd I never felt a Pleasure in Devotion; your Description has warm'd me.

SOCRATES.

Is there not a *Pleasure* in *Gratitude*, in owning our Obligations to a generous Benefactor, in expressing our Delight in his Prosperity, in celebrating his Merit,

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and depending on his continued Protection and Favour? And must not the most exalted Pleasures arise from acknowledging the greatest Obligations to the most perfect Goodness; from contemplating the infinite Happiness of the Deity springing from boundless *Perfection*, and the Consciousness of *infinite Communications* of good? What a firm Tranquility and solid Joy must it give, when we think of the Folly, Inconstancy, and Viciousness of Mankind, the Uncertainty of second Causes, and the Precariousness of all external Felicity, to reflect on ourselves as ever encompass'd by *Almighty Wisdom* and *Goodness*, as ever under the Care of our best Friend, the unchangeable Lover of Virtue, to whose Favour we may continually commend ourselves, yet more, and from whom Virtue, however treated by thoughtless Mortals, shall receive a Reward great as his Munificence, and as certain in the Event, as it is true in Theory, that Goodness is a proper Object of Approbation to a most wise and good Governour? Have you never experienc'd the Pleasure arising from the Consciousness of having preferred steddily what is right and good against

gainst Inclination and Example ; and what a heightning must it give to the Joy to regard the supreme Wisdom and Goodness as smiling on our Endeavours, accepting and aiding the generous Effort, concern'd for our Success, and delighted in it, and directing all the Events not in our Power in a Train most favourable to our Integrity?—

ALCIBIADES.

You pause — fear not lest my Attention tire. The Subject is new, great, and ingaging.

S E C T. XII.

SOCRATES.

HAVE I rais'd your Curiosity ? I will leave it to Experience fully to gratify the Desire, when I have put you on reflecting upon that *Ambition* which is *natural* to all *noble* Minds : the Desire of being conversant with the wise and great, and approv'd by them ; to have a free Access to the Court of the great King of *Persia*, to be distinguish'd by his Regards, and share his Counsels, what a tumultu-

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ous Pleasure does this excite in a youthful Breast, and what an Elevation does it give the Mind? And is there less to raise and gratify the noble Passion in a free Access to the *Monarch* of the *Universe*, in being allow'd to address him with assurance for the Supply of every good, and for Security from every Evil, in being admitted as Partners in his Designs in governing the World, and in a Consciousness of acceptably concurring with him in the promoting Virtue and Happiness among his Creatures? What Dignity does it give the human Character to be allowed a constant Access to the Court of Heaven, and to know our Applications to the great King pleasing and successful? I will only farther mention, what you will perhaps be surprized to hear me speak of, the *Pleasures of Repentance*. 'Tis confess'd to be the *least* pleasing Part of Devotion, and as a *Remedy* ought not indeed to be *too* pleasing, lest we lightly renew the Occasions of it; yet is it not wholly void of Pleasure. The Meltings of a filial Sorrow for Disobedience to the best of Parents are *approv'd* by Reason, and *natural* to the Mind in such a State, and there-

therefore *pleasing*. What ingenuous Heart but is more *delighted* in venting before a forgiving God its pious Sorrows for past Failures, than it could be in fullen *Ingratitude*, and obstinate *Disobedience*?

ALCIBIADES.

There is a resistless Evidence, *my dear* SOCRATES, in what you say, and a mighty Energy. The Subject fires you, and gives a Dignity to your Character, I never till now apprehended. I have my self caught somewhat of the *divine Enthusiasm*, and long for more—yet past Experience discourages me. Devotion *has* been tiresom and tasteless, and *may* again. Will you help me to *find* out and *remove* what has hindred my being delighted in Actions most reasonable, excellent, and fitted to give the noblest Pleasures?

S E C T. XIII.

SOCRATES.

MOST willingly—have you not enjoy'd great Pleasure in the Study of Mathematical Truths?

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ALCIBIADES.

I have.

SOCRATES.

Did you not find it difficult *at first* to fix your Attention, to trace out hidden Truths, and discover their Evidence and Beauty?

ALCIBIADES.

I did.

SOCRATES.

Did you not find it *impossible* to be attentive, and enjoy the Pleasure when *possess'd* by any strong *Passion*? While Ambition, Love, or Interest fill'd your Mind? Was it not necessary first to clear yourself from these, the Impression of external Objects, and the Hurry of violent Passions?

ALCIBIADES.

Certainly.

SOCRATES.

As the great *Object* of Devotion is *remote* from *Sense*, and only to be discerned with Clearness by an *attentive* Mind; is it not plain *Retirement*, a Disengagement from

from sensible Objects, and turbulent Passions, must be *necessary* to enjoy his Pleasures ?

ALCIBIADES.

This appears reasonable.

SOCRATES.

You are delighted with my Company, but is it *always* pleasing ? Have I not met you at Seasons when you would have gladly shun'd me ? After a Debauch, or an extravagant Sally of Passion, have you not been uneasy at my Presence, or kept out of Sight ? You blush—I expect no Answer. Would you have your Thoughts with Pleasure return to the Contemplation and Acknowledgment of the Deity, you must be careful so to *demean* as to have *no Reason* to *fear* his Presence. Would you be delighted with the *supreme Wisdom* and *Goodness*, you must be *wise* and *good* yourself. Would you cheerfully depend on the great Governour of the World, and rejoice in his Presence and Protection, you must render yourself *fit* for his Favour by an Obedience to his Will, and an Imitation of his Perfections, and have no Designs unfit to be

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succeeded by infinite Wisdom and Goodness. I would have mention'd too that the Mind must be *clear'd* from all *wrong* and *superstitious* Conceptions of God, as *Tyrannical* or *Capricious*, delighting in the Misery of his Creatures, to be sooth'd with Flatteries, or costly Sacrifices, or approving any thing besides true Goodness, a Veneration of his Perfections, and a Conformity to him in the Love and Practice of what is excellent—but your good Sense renders the inculcating this superfluous.

ALCIBIADES.

You have convinc'd me that as the Contemplation and Love of Truth and Goodness produce the noblest Pleasure, so Devotion must be pleasing. You have pointed out the Hindrances to the enjoying those Pleasures, which it concerns me to remove, and thus far your Reasoning appears strong and conclusive.

S E C T.

S E C T. XIV.

SOCRATES.

AND can you then doubt whether a Disposition so *reasonable*, and *productive* of such *solid* Joys in its Exercise be *advantageous*? If Veneration, Gratitude, and Resignation to the supreme Goodness ever present be so reasonable, and excellent, and the contrary Temper so base and guilty, can it be a Question whether the *all-wise* God who *governs* the World *makes a Difference* in his Administrations in Favour of the Devout? As all Causes and Events depend absolutely upon him, and both physical Causes and human Minds are under his constant Guidance, and he ever knows what is best, must he not order all things for the best to the Pious and Good? For these two Qualities are inseparable, a real Veneration and Love of the supreme Goodness, and an Imitation in proportion to our Abilities. Must not the superintending Deity keep far from him, what would injure his Virtue and true Felicity, and give every external Good, that

upon the whole would be really such to him? Must he not by his secret Inspiration direct him in the Conduct of Life, where human Prudence fails, and divert him from Designs and Pursuits that would be mischievous? Must not the all-wise and most beneficent Monarch of the World act thus towards his favourite Subjects and faithful Servants? Must not his perfect Wisdom supply the necessary Imperfection of theirs, his Bounty their Wants, and his almighty Power be their sure Defence from every threatening Evil, or carry them with Advantage thro' it? Can these Perfections be *unactive* in favour of their *proper* Objects? And must not the Deity, *displeas'd* with Impiety and Ingratitude, follow the guilty in these with *proper Tokens* of his Displeasure, leave them to the deceitful Conduct of their Pride and Passions, often frustrate their Schemes, or curse them even by Success? Must not every Event *as directed* by the Deity issue in *favour* of the *Pious*, and for *Chastisement* - *Ruin* to the *Neglecters* of the *Deity*, and the *Profane*?

S E C T. XV.

ALCIBIADES.

THIS Reasoning is to *Appearance* demonstrative, and if we regard only the allowed Perfections of the supreme Mind cannot be withstood. But in spite of this is not *Fact against you*? Are not *Appearances* in the moral World *widely different* from those which your Notions of the Deity and his Providence would lead us to expect? Where do we see him interposing for the Prosperity of the Pious, and where are those happy Effects of Devotion, we might count upon? Is not my Friend SOCRATES, who recommends and practises it in Circumstances, as mean and strait as the most profane? Do we not often behold the impious prosper, and even their Impiety the Means of their Prosperity? And where then is the *Reason* or *Advantage* of paying our Court to a Sov'reign, who *seems* to make no *Distinction* between those who *regard*, and those who *slight* him?

SOCRATES.

SOCRATES.

What you urge is plausible; yet, I believe, on a nearer Examination, the Difficulty will vanish. Are we certain that *all* whom we esteem pious and unfortunate are *really* so, that their Piety is genuine, or they unhappy more than in appearance? May not many who are sincerely devout be guilty of Vices, which require the Displeasure and the Chastisement of Heaven for their Amendment? Does not this show our *Ignorance* to be the chief Support of this Objection, that tho Pious Men are often puzzled to account for the divine Conduct towards *others*, yet as to their *own* Cases which they better understand, they can easily vindicate the divine Providence? And to answer your Objection more directly—if Devotion be attended with immediate happy Effects on our own Minds, we cannot doubt of what we feel, and whether what makes us happy be advantageous.

ALCIBIADES.

We cannot.

S E C T.

S E C T. XVI.

S O C R A T E S.

YOU allowed it fully prov'd, that to a Mind rightly disposed, the Contemplation and Love of the Deity, Gratitude and Dependance on him, must yield noble Pleasures. Farther, you grant Virtue to be a *Good*, the *greatest* Good, and Vice an *Evil*, the *greatest* Evil?

A L C I B I A D E S.

'Tis granted.

S O C R A T E S.

Does not *Temperance* in sensual Pleasures give Health to the Body, and Vigour to the Mind, and dispose for practising the noblest Virtues and enjoying the noblest Satisfaction? fit a Man to do good extensively to his Friends and Country, and acquire him universal Esteem and Love, and is not this a great Good? And is not *Intemperance* destructive of Health, Ease, and Vigour, both in Mind and Body? And will not a Disposition for the Pleasures of the Mind, and their Injoyment, make Temperance in
bodily

bodily Pleasures more easy? The Man wants them less, and is less attracted by them, who has Delights of a different kind to engage him. Is not the Love of Good and Right, and its steady Preference, most subservient to the truest Self-enjoyment, to conscious Honour and Integrity? And is not the constant Persuasion of the Presence, Justice, and Goodness of the Deity, one of the mightiest Assistants and Incentives to our practising Righteousness and Goodness?

ALCIBIADES.

These things seem too plain to be disputed.

SOCRATES.

When the Heat of Youth, the Pleasures of Sensuality, the Inticements of corrupt Companions, or the seeming Advantage of a vicious Action have strongly tempted and shaken your Virtue, has not the *Presence* of your Friend SOCRATES, a Concern for his Approbation, or the Thought that a guilty Compliance would not stand his Inquiry, been a great *Restraint*, and often prop'd your staggering Virtue? And must not a lively Conviction of an *ever-present Deity*, infinitely

finitely Wise, Good and Powerful, who can be pleas'd with nothing but Virtue and Goodness, and who will render them as happy as they are excellent, must not this establish your Virtue, and make you superiour to the most tempting Offers of Pleasure, Wealth or Ambition? You have often struggled against Vice, and often overcome: say, did you ever know Pleasure like that of conquering Inclination in an important Trial, and adhering to what was excellent and honourable?

ALCIBIADES.

I confess the pleasing Truth.

S E C T. XVII.

SOCRATES.

WILL not this remove your Objection as to my Case: you do not think me for *Virtue* inferior to those you admire as the most Prosperous?

ALCIBIADES.

Far from it.

SOCRATES.

If my *Poverty* then has been *favourable* to my *Virtue* have I reason to complain?

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ALCIBIADES.

It seems not.

SOCRATES.

Have I less Vigour of Body, less Strength and Tranquillity of Mind ? Do I eat my plain Food with less Pleasure, am I less sprightly, or more loaded after it than the Luxurious ? Do you see me uneasy in the Absence of any of those things which Riches can give ? Can they give more than Contentment, or even that ? Am not I beloved by the Wise, and Good, and Rich ? Have not I an Influence over many for their Advantage, and have the Men of Wealth and Power more Ability to serve their Friends than I have notwithstanding my Poverty ?

ALCIBIADES.

Yet certainly, if well used, Riches, Power, and Distinction are valuable.

SOCRATES.

You say right *if well used*. But if Wealth beget Intemperance, a weak sickly Body, and an impotent Mind ; if it swell with Pride, irritate the Passions, make a Man uneasy to himself, imperious and intolerable to all about him, render

render him less benevolent, and less beloved ; excite those Vices, which a humble State suppress'd, and draw on Evils to which Poverty is a Stranger, may it not proceed from the *Love* of God to the *Devout*, that he continues them in a lower Condition ?

ALCIBIADES.

I cannot well deny what you say, yet I confess I do not heartily relish it.

SOCRATES.

A longer Acquaintance in the World, and a more established Virtue, will dispose you for apprehending these Truths in all their Evidence. And farther, Devotion may be advantagious, where its Advantages are not *distinctly perceived* by us. 'Tis granted we are open to many Evils which human Prudence cannot foresee : if then, as a Reward to Devotion, the all-seeing Deity prevent these, the Benefit is never the less *real* tho we do *not at present* apprehend it. And are we not justified, certainly, to conclude from the Perfections of God that he doth thus favour genuine Piety ?

S E C T. XVIII.

ALCIBIADES.

BUT Disgrace, Banishment, Loss of an Estate, ungrateful Treatment from our Friends and Country, Sufferings and Death, must be allowed Evils, and the contrary desireable: yet does not *Athens* often make these the *Portion* of eminent *Merit*? And even those *Qualities* by which they deserve well from the Deity, and from their Country, thro' the Corruption and Envy of a prevailing Faction, shall bring on those Calamities. Did not *ANAXAGORAS* by advancing just and honourable Notions of the supreme Mind, and opposing popular Errors, incur the Displeasure of the Ignorant and Superstitious; and did not they prevail so far as to banish him, and reduce him to Extremity, even to perish by Want in a foreign Country? Is not *ARISTIDES* firnam'd the *Just* another late Instance; who was banished because his distinguished Integrity shamed the Corruption of his Countrymen? Ought not the Deity to have interposed in
their

their Favour, and are not such Cases a Confutation of your apparently demonstrative Reasons? Do not Wars, Plagues, and Shipwrecks, swallow up without Distinction the good and bad, the pious and profane? And when I consider the prevailing Superstition of the *Athenians*, and the Freedom with which you oppose it, I cannot but tremble for *you*.

SOCRATES.

I own there are Instances where Piety and Virtue appear not to have been their own full Reward in the present Life, tho in those Instances they have *greatly relieved* the good, and rendred them *less unhappy* than Vice and Impiety on the whole would have made them. A wise and pious Man, who hath just and worthy Notions of the best of Beings, and who, warmly concerned for his Honour, opposeth popular Superstitions, may be requited with Ignominy, Banishment, or Death. Envy, Malice, State-factions, and the like, have often crush'd the Pious and Good. An unhappy Constitution of Body often deprives the Temperate of the Rewards of Temperance, Health and Vigour. A Temper naturally ill-disposed
for

for Virtue, and strongly inclining to Vice, tho (where it is strongly opposed, and the contrary Virtues are formed with Labour and Constancy) it approves and heighens the *Merit* of a virtuous Practice, yet it lessens the *present* Satisfactions and Reward: Life being almost one continual Conflict, and the Enemy after innumerable Defeats not wholly subdued, but ever taking Advantage of the least Negligence, and by sometimes prevailing, and the Necessity hence arising of continual Watchfulness, ballancing the Pleasure of many Victories. Ungrateful and wicked Children will defraud a pious faithful Parent of the Reward of his Care and Fidelity in their Education, and give him severe Uneasiness. Calumnies may eclipse the Honour of the Good. Friends greatly obliged may prove treacherous, and our Country ungrateful, punish the Good, and encourage the Evil, and sinking under its Vices, fill the true Patriot with the most anxious Concern, and involve him in its Ruins. Tho, upon the whole, Virtue makes a Man in *most* Cases happier than Vice in *the same* would have done; yet in the present Life, Happiness

ness is not *proportioned* to Virtue, nor thro' external Accidents, or the Viciousness of others, are the most Virtuous *always* the most Happy. But what does all this amount to more than an *additional Proof* to the many others Reason furnishes of a *future State*? Doth not God seem to have left those Cases purposely *unprovided* for, that he might lead our Expectations forward to another Scene? If there be a future State, ought not this for the Trial and Improvement of our Virtue to be as it is? And will not all these Objections vanish on View of a future State?

ALCIBIADES.

A future State doth indeed appear an effectual Answer; and from some Conversations of yours, I am inclined to believe its Reality: the Notion is of the greatest Use to support Virtue against Opposition, and ill Success; I should therefore be pleased to examine anew your Arguments for it.

S E C T.

S E C T. XIX.

SOCRATES.

I Would rather at present relieve you from this long Attention, and chuse a Season when you may come fresh to the Inquiry——to return now to your Difficulty with regard to ANAXAGORAS and ARISTIDES. Is it not clear, that the Man who to his other Victories over various Oppositions in the Paths of Virtue, for the *Crown* of all adds a Victory over *Death*, and untterrified by its formidable Appearance is constant to the End, as thereby he *fully* approves his Virtue, and carries it to the *highest* Point of Perfection, must enjoy in *Reflection* the most exalted Pleasures, and be *more* the Object of the divine Complacency?

ALCIBIADES.

He must.

SOCRATES.

If then in a future State, Happiness be proportioned to Virtue here, are not these Sufferings, and even *Death* in their Permission, Effects of the *Favour* of Heaven,

Heaven, since thus increasing his Virtue, they increase his Happiness?

ALCIBIADES.

I have no farther Difficulty on this head, the Proof is conclusive, from the divine Presence, Perfections, and Government, for the Happiness of the Devout and Virtuous, and I will endeavour to qualify myself for this Happiness.

SOCRATES.

'Tis nobly resolved—you will remember that *Piety* is a principal Part of Virtue, as well as the mightiest Assistant to the practising every other instance of Virtue. To *incourage* you to *Constancy* against the Difficulties that will at first oppose the disengaging the Mind and Affections from Sense, and accustoming them with Pleasure to Objects purely rational; and to convince you that this Practice, tho' *difficult*, is *necessary*, let us employ our Thoughts a little on the Nature of this future State.

ALCIBIADES.

Agreed.

S E C T. XX.

SOCRATES.

IN this other State which the Soul enters by dropping this Body of Flesh, those Pleasures that have their *whole* Relation to, and Dependance on the Body, must cease of course. Where there is no fleshly Part to be supported by eating and drinking, the Pleasures of the Palate can, for instance, be no more expected : and where all are immortal, and the Succession is at an End, the Pleasures annexed to the continuing the Species, and repairing the present Wastes of Death, will no more be known.

ALCIBIADES.

Tis granted.

SOCRATES.

The Contemplation of the Deity and his Works, Admiration, Praise and Love of the best of Beings, in one Word *Devotion* in its *Perfection* ; together with perfect Virtue, and perfect Friendship, and the Society of Beings of this Character, must be supposed the principal Employ-

Employments and Pleasures of this future State ?

ALCIBIADES.

I can think of none more natural, or more likely to compose their Happiness.

SOCRATES.

Your noble Disposition, and the Taste you have had of them, must convince you that the full Possession of these Delights, free from all Distraction, Allay, or Interruption, must make the Possessor happy to the greatest Degree.

ALCIBIADES.

The Pleasures your Friendship and Conversation have given me, and the Taste I had of the Pleasures of Devotion in the Moments when your Description rais'd me, will not suffer me to doubt but that all *other* Joys are greatly *inferiour* to these.

SOCRATES.

Have you not observ'd that where Men *abandon* themselves to the Pleasures of *Sense*, they necessarily contract an *Incapacity* for the Pleasures of the *Mind*, of Knowledge, Gratitude, and Virtue :

and fix even in the Soul Inclinations to the meaner Pleasures, which torment them after the Enjoyment of their Objects, is thro' Age or Sicknefs, become impossible?

ALCIBIADES.

I believe you might as soon make *Swine* Philosophers, as some I know in *Athens*.

SOCRATES.

Does it not seem *wise* and *fit* for the Deity to *insist* on our *Endeavours* to be prepar'd for the noblest Satisfaction, in *kind* approaching his own Felicity, and our manifesting a Preference of them by a Contempt of bodily Pleasures when Competitors for our Choice? Is not this Sacrifice a proper *Qualification* for our full Enjoyment of the other? And when God has made Labour the *Price* of every *other* valuable Quality and Possession, can we think he would *prostitute* this highest Good of all to the *Slothful* and *Brutish*, who neglect or trample on it?

ALCIBIADES.

ALCIBIADES.

The supreme Wisdom cannot act after this manner.

SOCRATES.

Those then who are sunk in *bodily* Pleasures, and who throughout Life show the greatest Contempt for the Pleasures of the Mind, must be judg'd incapable and unworthy of this *rational* Felicity?

ALCIBIADES.

They must.

SOCRATES.

Will not the Deity be *most pleas'd* with those who are *most concern'd* for the Dignity and Perfection of the Nature he hath given them, and who now prefer those Pleasures that render them *most like* himself, and prepare them for his Society and Friendship?

ALCIBIADES.

Certainly.

SOCRATES.

Must he not then be in the *highest* Degree delighted with the *most* Devout, those who with the greatest Application cultivate a Knowledge of the Deity, an
Inter-

Intercourse with him by Prayer and Praise, and a divine Resemblance, and who prefer those Satisfactions tho enjoyed but imperfectly here, before the most luxurious Gratifications of Sense, and the largest Offers of Wealth or Ambition? Are not such in their Disposition *qualified* for a higher Taste, and more abundant Enjoyment of *mental* Delights in a future State? And will not the supreme Goodness, as a *Token* of his *approving* this Preference of the Mind to the Body, and of intellectual and moral Beauty before corporeal, *indulge* them in those Pleasures hereafter in the *greatest* Degree? Does not then habitual fervent Devotion, with regard to a future State, appear infinitely our Wisdom and Happiness? Thus to acknowledge the Deity, and zealously to imitate him in the most extensive Beneficence to Mankind, will therefore be the principal Concern of one who hopes soon to be free from the Prison of the Body, and to live, and act, and enjoy, after a manner more worthy the Offspring of the Deity. — Have you any more Objections?

ALCIBIADES.

No—you have convinc'd me that the Practice of Devotion is reasonable, pleasant, and advantageous; that where a Taste for it is wanting it ought above all things to be acquir'd; that one concerned to be virtuous and happy in the greatest Degree should be *devout*; that it is his truest Wisdom with regard to this *first* State of his Existence, and infinitely so with regard to that *purser* manner of existing and acting, which the Pious enter upon after Death: that he must therefore so frequently apply himself to those Exercises of Devotion as to render the Temper habitual, and that the Morning and Evening are proper Seasons by Nature mark'd out for these Employments——but all this concludes only for *private* Devotion. Can you give me Reasons which *oblige* to an Attendance on its *publick* Offices?

S E C T.

S E C T. XXI.

S O C R A T E S.

THEY are easily enough supplied. If *private* Favours demand Acknowledgments from *private* Persons; ought not *publick* Benefits, those the Commonwealth *jointly receives* from the Favour of Heaven, to be *jointly acknowledged*? As *every one* shares in the Happiness of a good Government, a prosperous Administration of Affairs, fruitful and healthful Seasons, Success in War, the Blessings of Peace, and the like, is it not fit *every one* should *join* in the Acknowledgment? Is not the *Neglect* of this a *Denial* contrary to Truth and Gratitude that they are in common obliged, and in common dependent on the Deity?

A L C I B I A D E S.

This is evident.

S O C R A T E S.

You have been convinced that to be *virtuous* and *devout*, yields the *truest* Happiness; ought not then every *Lover* of his Country and of *Mankind*, to endeavour
that

that *they* may attain the truest Happiness: and is not the publick Worship of the Deity, the fittest Means to ingage the generality usually thoughtless about Religion, to the Acknowledgment and Worship of the Deity, and the Practice of real Goodness? Mankind are mightily influenced by Example, especially of Persons of Quality and Distinction like you. They cannot see your inward Piety while you neglect external Devotion. If Persons of Knowledge superiour to theirs, and whose Obligations to the divine Munificence are so much larger, neglect the publick Worship of the Deity, they will think themselves much more excusable in the Neglect. As therefore the Influence of your Example is greater, and the Favours by which Heaven has distinguish'd you are greater, the greater will the Guilt be of leading Men to a Disregard of the supreme Goodness.

ALCIBIADES.

It does appear the Part of every Lover of his Country and of Mankind, by a serious Attendance on publick Worship to express his inward Veneration of the

L supreme

supreme Mind, and thus excite others to a like Demeanour ; and the more conspicuous and influential his Character, the greater I own the Obligation. Have you any other Reasons ?

SOCRATES.

I would add this one, 'tis *highly conducive* to *increase* our own Devotion. Men were designed for Society, and are united by *kindred* Passions. There is a mutual *Sympathy*, and a kind of *Contagion* in the Passions. The seeing another strongly possess'd by any Affection naturally excites a like in us. Devotion therefore will be more warm, and the divine Enthusiasm more sensibly felt, and the Elevation given to the Mind be greater, when with a numerous Assembly, full of a Sense of the Deity, his Providence, and Goodness we engage in his Worship.

ALCIBIADES.

Experience is with you here. I was never so *strongly* affected with the Beauty of Virtue, and of a great Character, as at a *Tragedy* of *Euripides*, when in concurrence with the Excellency of the principal Character, the *general* Admiration appearing in every Countenance rais'd
my

my Esteem to the highest Complacency, and a sort of Adoration.—I have now only to act agreeably to what you have taught me of the Excellency and Obligation of a devout Temper. A mighty Assistant to this will be a stronger Persuasion of a future State, to which I expect your favourable Concurrence at a more proper Season.

S O C R A T E S.

My dear ALCIBIADES, nothing can be more agreeable than to form a Mind like yours to the highest Virtue.—I shall be obliged to you for the first Opportunity of this kind you give me—till then, Adieu.

F I N I S.





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